

Admission of children outside their normal age group

September 2025 normal intake
- community schools

This policy relates to requests to defer the admission of children outside their normal age group, including the process for the admission of “summer born children”** into the Reception year instead of year 1 for September 2026. Please read this policy in conjunction with the [School Admissions Code 2021](#)

Requesting admission outside of a child's normal age group

The School Admissions Code 2021 states:

Paragraph 2.18

“Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child⁵⁷ may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. Admission authorities **must** make clear in their admission arrangements the process for requesting admission out of the normal age group.”

Paragraph 2.19

“Admission authorities **must** make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent's views; information about the child's academic, social, and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. They **must** also take into account the views of the head teacher of the school concerned. When informing a parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the admission authority **must** set out clearly the reasons for their decision.”

Paragraph 2.20

“Where an admission authority agrees to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (i.e. the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school) the local authority and admission authority **must** process the application as part of the main admissions round, unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible, and on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. They **must not** give the application lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted out of their normal age group. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school, but it is not in their preferred age group.”

1. Seeking a school place for a child outside his/her normal age group

- Families may seek a place for their child outside of his/her normal age group under various circumstances such as ill health, if the child is gifted and talented or when the child has experienced problems.
- Parent/carer's of summer born children^{**} may also ask to defer their child's entry to school outside of his/her normal age group, to start in Reception in September 2026, when the child will reach

compulsory school age*. The table below illustrates when a child reaches compulsory school age* and the date by which they must enter school, according to their date of birth:

Child's date of birth	Date child reaches compulsory school age (prescribed date)	Latest point of entry into primary school
1 September 2020 – 31 December 2020	31 December 2025	January 2026 (start of spring term)
1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021	31 March 2026	April 2026 (start of summer term)
1 April 2021 – 31 August 2021 ("summer born children")**	31 August 2026	The start of the academic year commencing September 2026

- **When transferring to Year 7, parents/carers should note that all secondary schools in Southwark are their own admission authority and the decision to admit children outside of their normal age group at secondary age would be solely at the discretion of the school. The LA will work with families to facilitate their request; however parents should note that this cannot always be guaranteed.**

2. The process for families residing in Southwark to request admission outside of the child's normal age group

(a) Summer born children (deferring entry to Reception until September 2026)**

- Parents/carers must initially submit a primary application for the child's school place within the child's normal age group by 15 January 2025. This is so that a school place is made available for the child in his/her normal age group should the request to defer be refused. Please note, that it is not possible to make an application for an admission or reserve a school place for the following academic year.
- Parents/carers residing in Southwark who wish for their child to be admitted in the Reception year outside his/her normal age group in September 2026 must complete and return the ["Request for admission outside of a child's normal age group" form](#) which can also be requested by email from the [school admissions team](#). You must return the completed form to the Southwark [school admissions team](#) by email as documents returned by post will not be accepted. We strongly advise that this is done prior to submitting the primary application.
- Families in Southwark are able to list both community and non-community schools on the request form. Where a non-community school has been named on the form, the local authority will ensure that the request is passed on to the relevant non community school/s for their consideration.
- Families who do not reside in Southwark must contact their home local authority for further information on how to request admission outside of the normal age group as the process may vary.

(b) If the child is gifted and talented, has missed school due to medical grounds or for any other reason

- Parents/carers residing in Southwark wishing to request admission outside of their child’s normal age group at a Southwark school must complete and return the [“Request for admission outside of a child’s normal age group” form](#) which can also be requested by email from the [school admissions team](#). You must return the completed form to the Southwark [school admissions team](#) by email as documents returned by post will not be accepted. We strongly advise that this is done prior to submitting the primary application.
- Families in Southwark are able to list both community and non-community schools on the request form. Where a non-community school has been named on the form, the local authority will ensure that the request is passed on to the relevant non community school/s for their consideration.
- Families who do not reside in Southwark must contact their home local authority for further information on how to request admission outside of the normal age group as the process may vary.

3. Consideration of requests for admission outside of the child’s normal age group

- When completing the form, the parent/carer must set out the reasons why they are seeking a place for their child outside his/her normal age group and must be accompanied with relevant evidence which may include:
 - The parent/carer’s views;
 - Recent information about the child’s academic, social and emotional development;
 - Medical history accompanied with recent medical professional evidence;
 - Information relating to whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group; and
 - Whether the child may have naturally fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.
- As the local authority is required by the School Admissions Code 2021 to take into account the views of the headteacher of the community school/s concerned, the parent/carer may be invited to attend a meeting at the school/s. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the parent/carer’s request and the needs of the child concerned.
- For those families requesting admission outside of their child’s normal age group at a Southwark community school, a panel consisting of appropriate local authority officers [“LA panel”] will consider the parent/carer’s request and use its discretion to decide which year group a child should be placed within. **Families requesting admission outside of their child’s normal age group at a non-community school must contact the school directly for further information on how their request to defer will be considered.**
- Following the parent/carer’s meeting with the headteacher, the LA panel will make a decision taking into consideration the views of the headteacher and governing body of the community school

concerned and based on the individual circumstances of each case alongside the best interests of the child.

4. The decision of the LA panel (Southwark community schools only)

- Based on the information provided, once a decision has been reached on the year group the child should be admitted to, the local authority will write to the family, setting out clearly the reasons for their decision.
- Where the year group for the child has been agreed at a preferred school but a place cannot be offered, the parent/carer must contact the school admissions team to discuss the availability of places at other schools in Southwark. Please note however that this does not still guarantee a school place outside of the child's normal age group as the LA panel would need to seek the views of the headteacher at the school concerned. Additionally, due to the pressure on school places across London it is highly likely that many school places will have already been filled.
- **Even if the LA panel agrees to the parent/carer's request to admit the child outside of their normal age group, there can be no guarantee of a school place being available at the preferred school. This is dependent on whether the child fulfils the admissions criteria and the number of applicants that year.**

Summer born children (deferring entry to Reception until September 2026)**

- In addition to the factors stated above, where the LA panel agrees to admit a summer born child** into the Reception year at a community school in September 2026, the parent/carer must withdraw their child's primary application for a September 2025 place. They must then re-[apply online](#) for a Reception place in the following year, attaching a copy of the decision letter by 15 January 2026. The child's original application for admission in September 2025 will be withdrawn.
- If it is not possible to offer the child a Reception place outside of their normal age group at any Southwark primary school for the September 2026 intake, then the parent/carer must complete an in year form. The [in year form](#) is available online and must be submitted to the school admissions team in the term prior to when the child reaches compulsory school age. The school admissions team will then seek to offer the child a Year 1 place at the nearest Southwark primary school to their home with a vacancy.

5. Appealing against the decision to refuse admission outside of the child's normal age group

- Parent/carers have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied.
- The right to appeal **does not** apply if the child is offered a place at the school but the place offered is not within the parent/carers preferred age group.

6. Requesting the admission of a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan [“EHC”] outside his/her normal age group

Families of children with an EHC Plan who wish to defer their child’s entry to school must contact the Southwark [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team](#) by email or by telephone on 020 7525 4278 for further advice as this is a separate school admissions process.

*A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day).The prescribed days are currently 31st August, 31st December and 31st March.

** The term “summer born children” relates to all children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August – see table at page two).

[Further guidance](#) can be found in the advice issued by the Department for Education.

For advice and support relating to the admission of children outside of their normal age group please contact Southwark Council’s [school admissions team](#) by email or by telephone on 020 7525 0245.

